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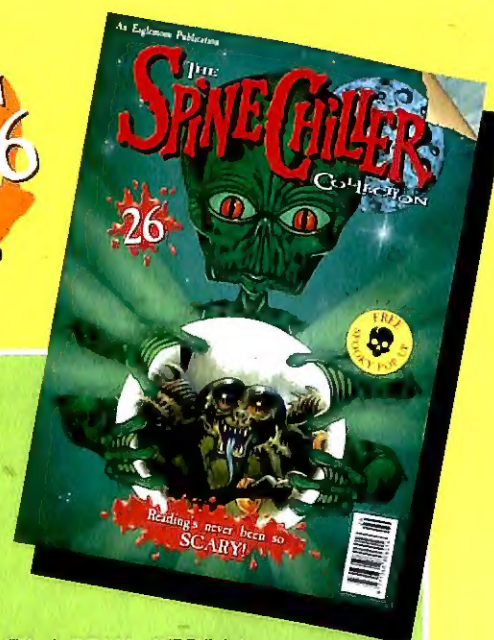
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FREE IN
ISSUE 26
Spooky
Pop-up



Next week in

THE SPINECHILLER
Collection

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The Invitation

OUR HAUNTED WORLD
Tibet
Not Yeti...

STRANGE BUT TRUE
Atlantis

CLASSIC SERIAL
The Dead Sexton
Chapter 1

PUZZLES
Alien Attack

THE UNEXPLAINED
Timeslips

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SECOND-HAND CLOTHES

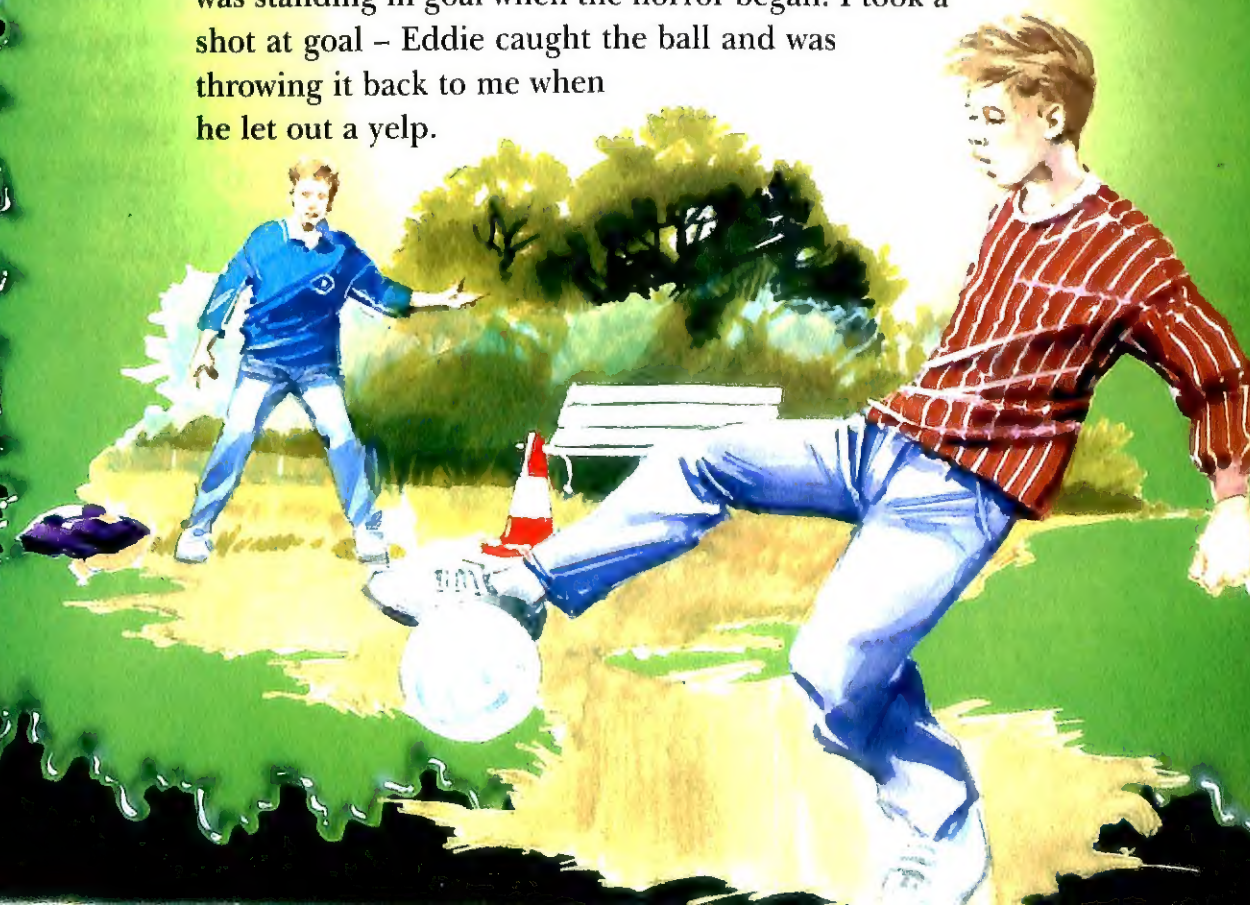


My name is Damon Hodges, and the story you're about
to read happened to me and my brother, Eddie. You
may accept it as true – which it is – or you may think
I made it up. Personally, if somebody told me a story
as weird as this one, I'd have trouble believing it.

Still, as I said, every word is true.

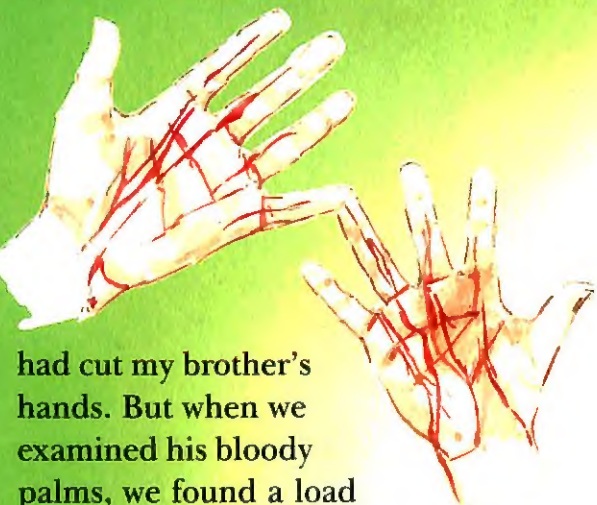
It all started on the day after Eddie's twelfth birthday,
during the Easter holidays. It was a Sunday, and that
morning Eddie and I went over to the park to kick a ball about.
Eddie was wearing all the clothes that he'd been given for his
birthday – a football shirt, a baseball jacket, and the kind of
trainers that the professionals wear. Since money's been a bit
tight for our family recently, Mum and Dad got all of Eddie's
birthday gear at a second-hand shop. But he didn't care as it
looked practically brand new.

Anyway, Eddie had just taken off his purple jacket and
was standing in goal when the horror began. I took a
shot at goal – Eddie caught the ball and was
throwing it back to me when
he let out a yelp.



"My hands are bleeding!" he cried. He dropped the ball and it rolled away, spattering blood all over the grass.

"What happened?" I asked, hurrying over to Eddie. I thought that it was my fault, that I'd kicked the ball so hard that it



had cut my brother's hands. But when we examined his bloody palms, we found a load of weird, deep gashes – not the kind he could have got from just catching a football but the kind of cuts you'd get if you fell on a load of broken glass or sharp rocks.

"What's happened to my hands?" Eddie cried, wincing in pain.

"No idea," I said with a shrug, trying to stay calm.



Shaking his head, Eddie told me he was going to wash off the blood, and I followed him over to the fountain. There was blood everywhere. I could tell that Eddie was pretty scared, and so was I. But what I saw after he'd washed off the blood really gave me the chills. There wasn't a single scratch to be seen on either of Eddie's hands!

"I don't get it," Eddie said. "Where are the cuts? Were they just my imagination?"

"I saw the cuts too," I said, staring at his now unharmed hands. "At least... I think I did. Do your hands still hurt?"

"Not any more," he replied. "And there's no trace of..."

Suddenly Eddie let out a cry of pain and grabbed his left arm. As if a giant invisible cat was dragging invisible claws across his skin, the flesh on Eddie's arm was ripping open right before our eyes.

"What's happening to me?" Eddie screamed, dancing around in pain.

"I-I d-don't know!" I stammered. "I've never seen anything like it. C'mon, let's go home!"



Our house was only about a kilometre from the park. But before we got there the blood on Eddie's arm had completely dried up. Then it just disappeared, like breath on a cold window. The scratches also vanished, like some weird special effect from a movie... only this was real!

Eddie was fighting back tears. "Why is this happening, Damon?" he repeated as we made our way home.

"I don't know," was all I could say.

The moment we got indoors, Eddie started shrieking again. He was rolling around on the carpet, this time clutching his leg. I knelt beside him, then got up to find our parents. Just then, Mum came hurrying in through the back door. "Eddie! Damon! What's wrong?" she yelled, gardening trowel still in her hand.

Dad came rushing downstairs. "What's all the commotion?" he asked.

"I think my ankle's sprained," Eddie said, writhing around, holding his leg.

"Did you hurt yourself playing football?" Mum asked.

"Mum," I said, "this has nothing to do with football. Something really weird is happening."

"What do you mean, weird?" Dad asked with a sceptical look as he bent over my brother.

Eddie and I blurted out the whole story but even as we spoke, I could tell that neither of my parents believed us. I could hardly blame them for thinking that we had made the whole thing up.

"Hmm. Yes, I see..." Dad said, one eyebrow raised. "Have you two ever thought of writing scary stories?"

"No, listen," I was getting a bit upset. "It really hap..."

"Let's get you off that ankle, Eddie," Mum said, cutting me off. "And, Damon, this is no time to be telling stories."

I stared at Eddie. It looked as though he was about to faint, and I felt I was going to explode with frustration. But for now, the best thing I could do for my brother was help my dad get him upstairs.

"I'll bring up some ice right away," Mum called, as if the only thing wrong with

Eddie was an ordinary sprain. But I knew there was something else up with him, something that ice wasn't going to fix.



Once we got Eddie into our room, Dad eased off Eddie's shoes and looked at his ankle. It was already badly swollen... at least it was until after Mum brought up the ice. Dad wrapped it up, and the two of them left the room. Then Eddie's eyes grew wide with fear.

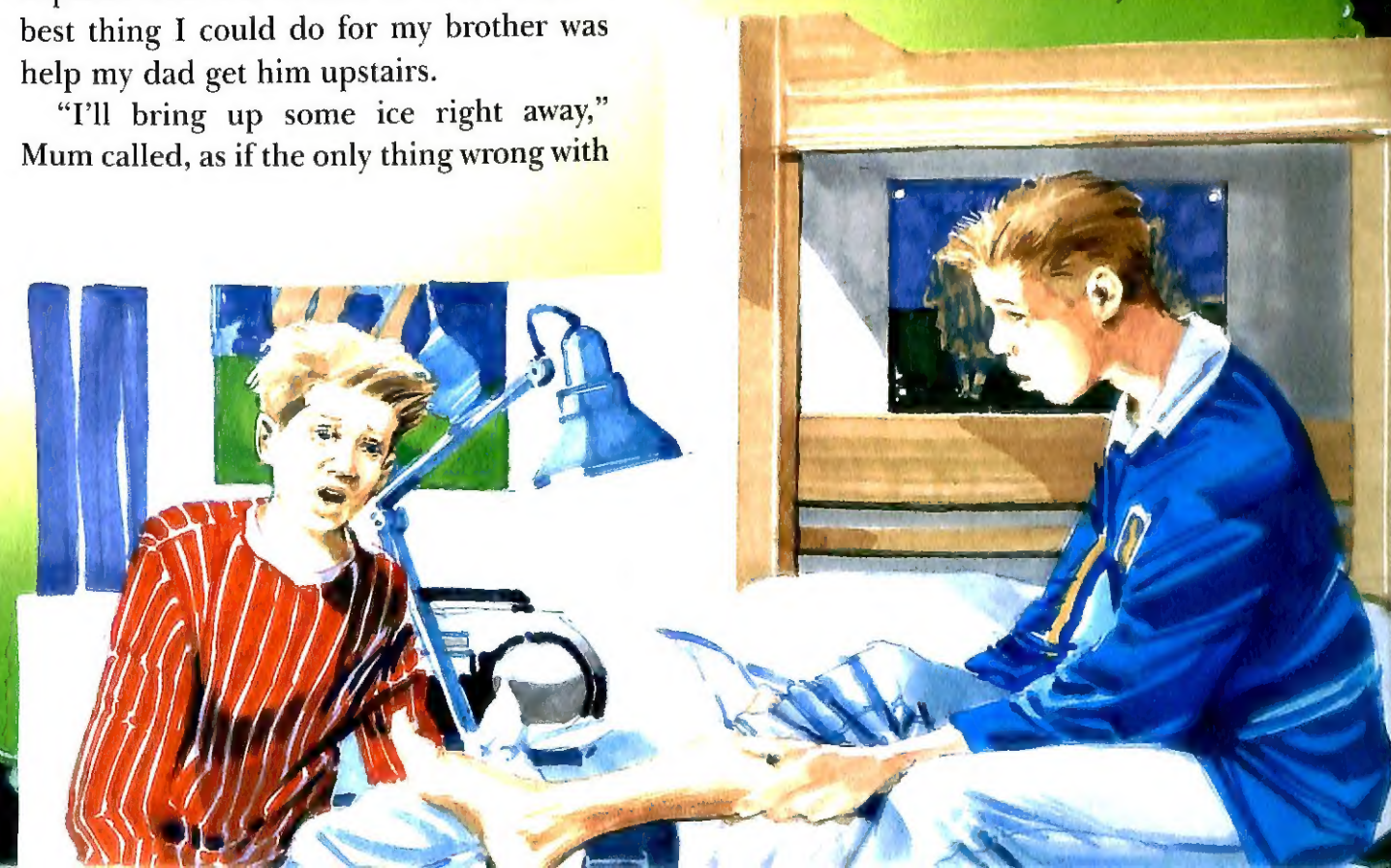
"Look at this, Damon," he said in a chilling whisper as he removed the ice pack and unwrapped his ankle.

The ankle swelling had completely disappeared.

"This is crazy," I said, shaking my head. "I don't get it."

"That makes two of us!" Eddie replied, wiggling his ankle.

"Look, it doesn't even hurt any more."



He shrugged, then pulled off his new football shirt. "I think I'll have a shower," he said as he headed for the bathroom – without even the trace of a limp. "It might just wake me up from this..." Suddenly he stopped in his tracks and slapped himself on the forehead. "What a complete idiot I am!" he exclaimed. "I left my new jacket on the grass at the park!"

He started putting his shirt back on, but I told him I'd go and fetch his jacket. I flew out of the house and ran almost the whole way to the park. I wanted something to go right for my brother today. I wanted to bring him his jacket and pretend that nothing bad had ever happened.

But my heart sank when I got there. The jacket was gone. I looked everywhere –



including the park-keeper's hut – before I headed home with the bad news.

Nothing happened for the rest of the day. But as if everything wasn't bad enough, Eddie was now really upset about losing his new jacket. The pair of us sat around trying to work out some kind of explanation for Eddie's mystery injuries.

Our parents seemed unconcerned and still didn't believe our story. Although Eddie had shown them how his ankle had miraculously healed, they just said he was lucky the ice had worked so quickly. On top



of that, they even seemed angry when Eddie told them he'd lost his new jacket.

By this time, we just wanted to forget the whole thing, so we spent the rest of the afternoon playing chess.

That night, I took a long time getting to sleep. We have bunk beds and Eddie, who has the lower bunk, was snoring so loudly that I thought I'd never doze off, but eventually I suppose I must have done.

It was about 3am when something woke me up. I heard a creaking noise and, blearily, I looked from our bedroom clock to Eddie, who was standing at the window with his back to me.

"Hey, Eddie," I said. "What are you doing? Can't you sleep?"

When he didn't answer, I started to feel really spooked, wondering what he was up to. "Eddie, come on. Stop it."

"Huh?" came a groggy, croaky voice from the bunk right below me.

Fear ran up my spine as I looked over the edge of my bed... at Eddie!

"Whaddya want?" he mumbled from the bed. Then I heard my brother gasp as he turned and saw that we were not alone.

"Wh-who are you?" Eddie stammered at the shadowy being that was now looking directly at him.

The figure slowly lifted its arms towards Eddie. "I am Gavin Burton," a boy's voice answered. His words sounded hollow, like whispers in a tomb. He paused a moment. "Give them back," he demanded.

"G-give wh-what back?" Eddie asked.

Suddenly, as though lit up inside by a bright, pinkish light, a boy appeared where the shadow had been. But he was there only briefly before he shrank to the size of a doll, then to nothing but a dot of light that eventually disappeared altogether.



For a second Eddie and I looked at each other in complete shock. Then we both screamed, a single, piercing scream that seemed to fill the entire house.

We were up the rest of the night, shaking like leaves. And our parents were a

little scared too. Although they tried to dismiss the whole thing as a product of our overactive imaginations, our yells in the middle of the night had shaken them up. Neither of them could account for the fact that both Eddie and I had seen and heard exactly the same thing at the same time.

"He said that his name was Gavin Burton, or something like that," Eddie told our parents for about the third time. "And he wanted something back."

"Do you know a family around here with that name?" I asked Mum and Dad.

Neither of our parents knew of a local Burton family, but they promised to try to find out in the morning – which they did.

At about 7am, Dad called the police station, but the desk sergeant he talked to didn't recognise the name Gavin Burton, and he didn't have time to check there and then. He did tell my dad that a convicted murderer had escaped a couple of days before and had been reported in our area, but his name was George Ember.

Mum and Dad made one or two more calls but got no information, and finally they had to give up and go to work. Worried about the news of the escaped convict, they told Eddie and me to stay indoors. Eddie didn't seem to mind – I guess he was afraid more weird stuff was going to happen – but I felt a bit annoyed. After all, it was a sunny day, and we only had a few days of the school holidays left.

Anyway, Eddie flopped on the sofa and flicked on the TV. I looked at him as though he was crazy. How could he behave as if nothing had happened? I mean... it's not every day that some ghostly kid shows up in your room in the middle of the night.

And then an idea hit me.

"I'm going to call Katie Klein," I told him, picking up the phone.

Eddie looked up at me, half interested. "Really? I didn't know you liked her."

"I don't," I said, annoyed. "But her dad is a reporter. Maybe he knows something about this Gavin Burton kid. You know, like an accident or something."

"Yeah, why not," Eddie said, finally taking his eyes off the stupid film he'd been watching.



As it turned out, Katie didn't even have to ask her dad about Gavin Burton. She already knew all about him. In fact, she'd met his parents when they'd come in to the second-hand shop where she helps out. It was a Charity Aid place, the very shop at which my parents had bought Eddie's birthday stuff.

"It's a sad story," Katie said. Then she told me all about Gavin Burton. As I listened, the hair stood up on the back of my neck. By the time I put the phone down, my hands were really trembling.

"What did she say?" Eddie asked me. "You look really shaky."

I started to tell him what Katie had told me, but just then he opened his mouth to let out a blood-curdling shriek.

Horried, I watched as he pulled up the front of his shirt to reveal a dark purple bruise. It looked as if ink had spilled all over his chest, ink that was now being absorbed right into his skin.

"Damon, help me!" he cried. And as he reached out to me

I heard the sickening sound of the bones of his right wrist snapping.

Rushing over to him, my heart beating with terror, I tried to rip the clothes off my brother. After hearing Katie's story I knew they were the cause of Eddie's pain.

"You've got to take off everything you got from the second-hand shop!" I yelled, pulling at one of his trainers.

But Eddie didn't answer. Instead, he made a horrible gurgling sound.



Then, as he opened his mouth to scream, a stream of water poured out!

"It's the clothes, Eddie!" I screamed, struggling with the laces of his other trainer. "They belong to Gavin Burton! The clothes are what he wants back!"

But by then Eddie had gone limp and his eyes had rolled back in his head. Realising that my only hope was to get those terrible clothes off him, I tore at his shirt. Somehow, I did it in time.

It was like a miracle. Eddie instantly started to breathe normally, the bones in his broken wrist reset themselves, and the bruise on his chest began to fade away.

"Y-you were wearing the clothes of a dead boy!" I told Eddie, my voice wobbling. "Gavin Burton died a couple of weeks ago. He was canoeing by himself at the lake when he tipped over. It was a horrible accident," I went on. "He was sucked into one of the drains in the dam and by the time they found him, his body was all beaten up. He had cuts all over his hands, scratches all over his arms, a twisted ankle... and a broken wrist!"

"All the things that happened to me!" Eddie exclaimed.

"Katie said Gavin's parents told her he liked to wear this kind of gear. Anyway, when he died they gave a lot of his stuff to the

same second-hand shop where Mum and Dad bought your birthday presents."

"But how could just wearing..." Eddie began.

"I don't know," I said. "But I *do* know that Gavin wants his clothes back."



That afternoon, Eddie and I went to the cemetery. We found Gavin Burton's grave and put his clothes beside it. Then we went home and just sat there for a bit.

Exhausted, we turned on the TV and were watching a game show when a special news bulletin interrupted it. The escaped convict had been located in the next county. He was dead when the police had found him, and investigators were said to be totally baffled by his corpse.

You see, they had found the car he'd been driving at the roadside. There wasn't a lake or stream or river anywhere nearby, but slumped behind the wheel was the convict... his lungs completely filled with water. The police hadn't a clue as to what had happened to him... they didn't see any connection between how the man had died and the purple baseball jacket he was wearing. But *we* did.

THE END

OUR HAUNTED WORLD

From the sun-drenched provinces of Spain, we bring you a collection of weird and scary tales to give you goosebumps...

THE DEADLY FISH

Going angling for a fish for your dinner isn't reckoned to be the most dangerous pastime – but for Maria Cista, it proved to be deadly. She was trying to free a hook from the mouth of a fish she'd caught, when it jumped from her hand and dived straight into her mouth. Poor Maria choked to death on what was to be her last (uncooked) dinner.



VICIOUS VULTURES

In the hilly region of Navarra, northern Spain, a band of Griffon vultures seem to have decided on a change of diet. Instead of feeding on carrion – dead and rotting meat – as they're shown doing below, they've been ganging together to surround sheep, which they peck to death before eating them!

In 1996, over 30 such cases were reported by farmers but no one believed them. Then, in 1997, photos of the vicious vultures in action finally convinced the Spanish government to pay out some compensation to farmers who lose sheep in this way. No one knows if this is the work of a single flock of 'baddies', or whether vultures everywhere will get the taste for fresh meat!



IT CAME FROM THE SEA!

On February 8, 1981, two boys looking out to sea at Isla Cristina, near Huelva, had the shock of their lives. They saw a light below the water, about 30 metres offshore. The light got brighter and brighter as it rose to the surface. At first, the boys thought it might be a submarine. But then, when the light came right out of the water and shot upwards into the sky, they had to think again! The light hovered at about 500m above the sea, then vanished completely. Nothing on Earth is supposed to do this, so could the boys have seen a USO – an Unidentified Submarine Object?

THE TRAVELLING NUN

Since the 1600s, people have been arguing about the story of Sister Mary, a nun from Agreda. Although she never left her convent, she claimed to have made over 500 trips to New Mexico in America! While there, she worked as a missionary with the Jumano Indians and gave them gifts from Spain. Church leaders tried to stop her making these claims. But the Jumanos and other missionaries in New Mexico said that Sister Mary's story was all true! It was also found that her gifts had really come from her convent in Spain. Some people believe that she was able to teleport herself across the vast Atlantic Ocean to New Mexico. Others feel that Sister Mary's story could be an example of bi-location – the ability to exist in two places at once. What do you think?



A COOL CRIME!

A friend of a friend knew a young couple who lived in Barcelona...



1 They'd rented a warehouse near the port and had spent weeks doing it up as a night club.



2 Some comics artist friends painted spooky murals on the walls, and posters about the new Disco Misterioso went up across the city.



3 On opening night, there was a queue to get in. People in spooky fancy dress got in free!



4 The first night was declared a roaring success.

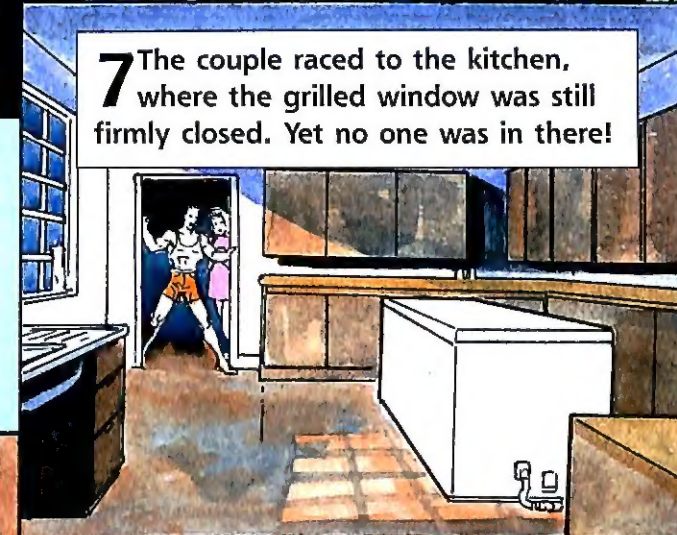
5 As the last people left, the couple went up to their flat above the club.



6 A loud crash woke them up. They ran downstairs, to find glasses smashed near the till. A horned figure was running into the kitchen!



7 The couple raced to the kitchen, where the grilled window was still firmly closed. Yet no one was in there!



8 They ran to the cellar but found no one. Warily, they decided to worry about it all in the morning.



9 Next day, when they opened the big chest freezer, their hearts nearly stopped for there, frozen solid, was the horned burglar, still clutching the money he'd taken from the till!

10 He'd hidden in the freezer and been unable to get out again. The police later joked that they'd never known a thief to act so incredibly cool!



THE HOPE DIAMOND

Special Investigation File: 25

Subject: a diamond that may have led to disaster

SpineChiller creates a file

Evidence no: 25/1
The Hope Diamond as it is now



ROYAL REPORT

Some time after Tavernier's death, the French royal family acquired the gem. They called it the 'Blue Diamond of the Crown'. King Louis XIV had the diamond reduced in size. Then:

- Louis' finance minister, Nicolas Fouquet, wore it to a ball. He was later found guilty of fiddling the royal accounts and imprisoned for life.
- Louis' armies were defeated by Austria and the king died, perhaps of shock, in 1715.
- Marie Antoinette, King Louis XVI's wife, often wore the gem. She and Louis were beheaded in 1793, during the French Revolution.

By then the diamond had disappeared.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over five centuries ago, a huge, blue-white diamond was extracted from a rock in southern India. The jewel was then placed in the forehead of a Hindu god's statue. Shortly afterwards, a priest stole it from the temple where the statue stood. He was later captured and tortured to death for his crime.

That at least is the legend of the beautiful gemstone that later became known as the Hope Diamond. Whatever its real origins may have been, it is certainly true that many of its owners suffered terrible misfortunes.

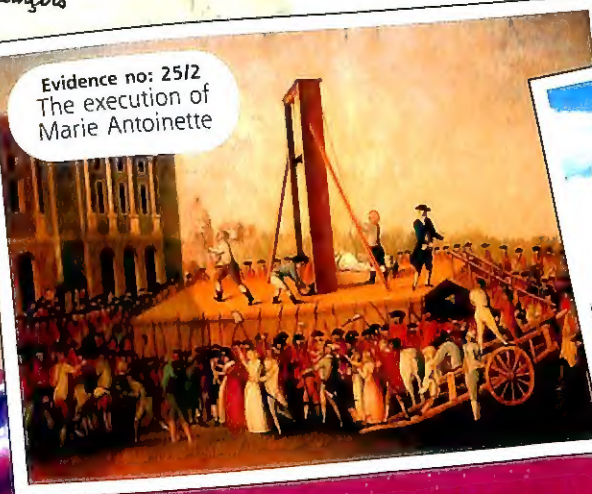
Dear Pierre

You remember Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who turned up with that mysterious Indian diamond in 1642? Well, he's dead. After he sold the diamond, he bought a huge house with the profits. But his son was a gambler and soon had terrible debts. Jean Baptiste paid them off, losing his fortune. He went back to India hoping to find another gemstone. But instead he was killed by vicious dogs. What a tragedy!

Yours ever

François

Evidence no: 25/2
The execution of Marie Antoinette



Evidence no: 25/4
Evelyn McLean wearing the Hope Diamond in 1938



DEADLY DIAMOND
In the early 19th century, a gem not seen since 1792 turned up in the workshop of a Dutch diamond-cutter. He reshaped then sold the stone.

In 1830, Irish financier Henry Thomas Hope bought the gem and it became known as the Hope Diamond. It brought only misery, as the Hope family sank into poverty.

The jewel's next rich owner fared no better. Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey purchased it in 1908. He presented it to his wife, then stabbed her. A year later, the sultan was toppled from his throne.

Evidence no: 25/3
Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey



Dear Arthur

I am writing a book about the McLean family, former owners of the Hope Diamond. This is what I have found out:

Edward Beale McLean bought the gem in 1911 for \$154,000. Then he was a wealthy press baron, but later lost all his money. He died in an asylum.

Edward's wife, Evelyn, became a drug addict. She was found dead in her flat, but no one knows how she died.

Edward's son was knocked over by a car.

Edward's daughter died of a drug overdose.

I would be grateful for further information.

Sincerely yours

John

CONCLUSION

The McLeans sold the gem to American jeweller Harry Winston. He gave it to the Smithsonian Institute, a Washington museum. Some people think the stone is jinxed because it was stolen from a holy statue. Others think it is coincidence that the gem's owners suffered so many tragedies.

Unexplained

Evidence no: 25/5
The Smithsonian Institute, Washington



CLASSIC

SERIAL



Chapter 2

THE GHOST CHAMBER

Retold from a story by Charles Dickens

The figure that the mysterious old man had seen in the tree was a youth. He had rapidly descended, then dropped from a bottom branch.

The man had seized the youth by the collar. "What thief are you?"

The young man shook himself free and stepped back, crying, "Don't touch me, you wicked murderer!"

"What!"

"I climbed this tree four years ago. To look at her. I climbed it, often, to watch and listen for her. I was a boy, when from that bay-window she gave me this!"

Then he showed me a tress of flaxen hair, tied with mourning ribbon.

"She gave me this, as a token of her mourning and a sign that she was dead to everyone but you," he sobbed. "If I had been older, I might have saved her!"

The older man stood still, his bill-hook in his hand, looking at the younger man.

"The night you brought her back, I heard her beg your mercy and forgiveness. Three times from the tree, I saw you, slowly killing her. I saw her, lying dead on her bed. I have watched you, from the tree, for proof of your guilt. How, I do not yet know, but I will see you hanged. You shall never be rid of me. I loved her!"

The accused man moved towards the gate, but to get to it he had to pass his accuser. The back of the young man's head was turned towards him. It was as if the thing was done before he did it. The curved blade cleft the head and remained there. The young man lay face down on the ground.

He had buried the body that night, at the foot of the tree. But he had destroyed his triumph. Having rid himself of the bride and acquired her fortune without endangering his life, he now, for a death that had gained him nothing, would live evermore with a rope around his neck. Afraid to sell or leave the house; lest discovery of the body should be made, he was chained to it. So he had hired two old people, a man and his wife, as servants to help him in the house.



He had done the gardening himself and made an arbour over against the tree, where he could sit and see the grave was safe. As the seasons had changed, the tree changed. In summer, the upper boughs had appeared to take the form of the young man. When the leaves fell in autumn, he had thought that they were heaping themselves into a mound above the grave.

There was a search for the young man, but it had been unsuccessful and the youth was eventually forgotten. He, meanwhile, had grown richer. In ten years, his fortune had increased twelvefold.

But then, one night, a fierce and terrible thunderstorm had raged. In the morning, he had been informed by his serving-man that the tree had been struck by lightning, and that the trunk had split in half.

There was great curiosity to see the tree, but he had refused to admit visitors. There were certain men of science, though, who had wanted to dig it up by the roots to examine it. He had refused as usual. But they had bribed the old serving-man and stolen into the garden by night with their lanterns, picks and shovels. Sleeping in a turret-room on the other side of the house, he had been awakened, and got up.

From an upper window he had been able to see their lanterns, and them, and the

huge mound of loose earth. When they had found the body and were all bending over it, one of them said, "The skull is fractured," while another had pointed out, "There's a rusty bill-hook!"

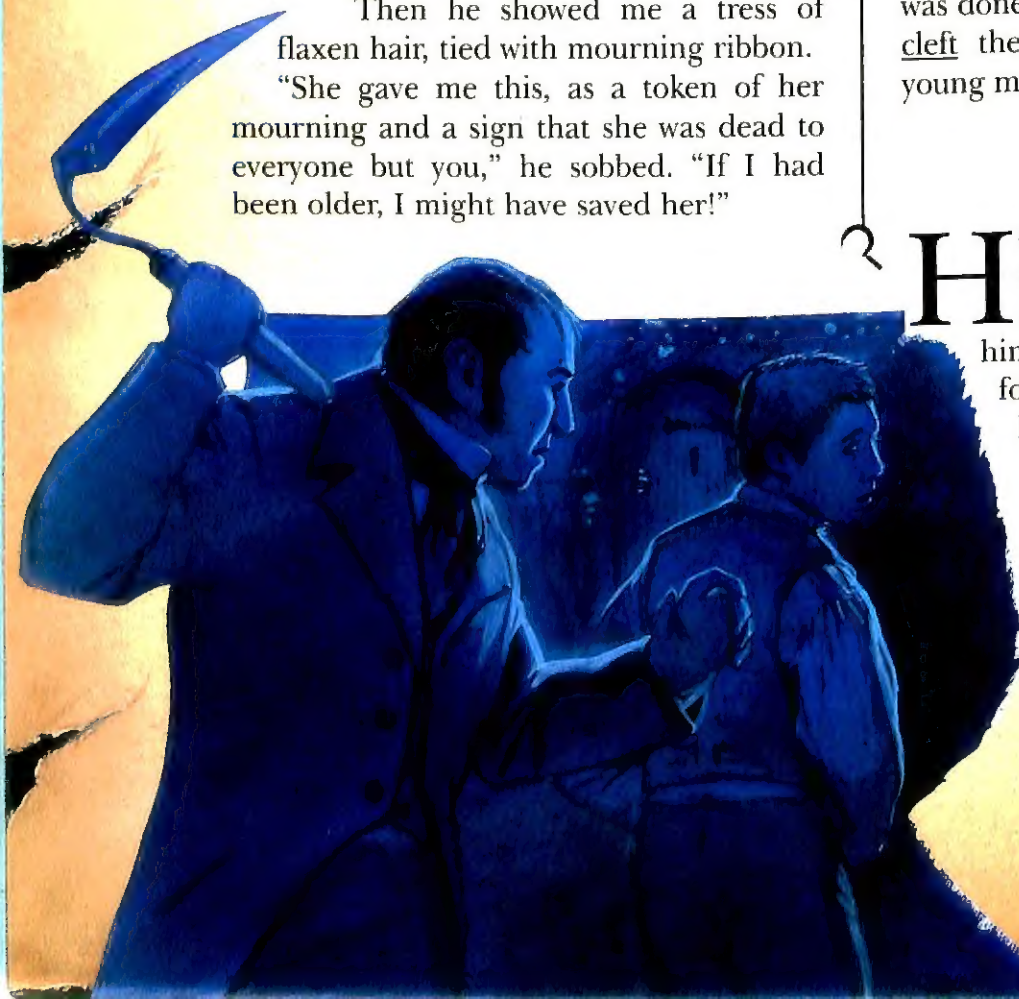
He had been arrested and held for the youth's murder and was further accused of having poisoned his pretty young bride. Soon afterwards he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. His money had not been able to save him.

This was how the old man ended his sorry tale. Then he announced to Mr Goodchild and Mr Idle: "I was that man, and I was hanged at Lancaster Castle with my face to the wall a hundred years ago."

At this, Mr Goodchild tried to rise and cry out. But the two fiery lines extending from the old man's eyes to his own kept him down, and he could not speak. Then the clock struck twice, and he saw before him two old men. The eyes of each were connected with his own eyes by two lines of fire. Each man was exactly like the other, and they addressed him as one.

"I had been dissected in the medical school, but had not yet had my skeleton

Underlined words are explained in WORD POWER.





put together, when people began to whisper that the chamber of my bride – a room in this very house – was haunted. It was haunted, and I was there.

"We were there. I, in the chair upon the hearth, she, a white wreck again, crawling towards me on the floor. But I was the speaker no more, and the one word that she said to me from midnight until dawn was, 'Live!' Every night from midnight until dawn she approaches, never coming nearer, always only ever saying, 'Live! Live!'"

"Eleven months of the year I endure this torment. But in the month that I was hanged – this month – the bride's chamber is empty and quiet. However, the rooms where I spent ten years in fear after killing the youth – these rooms – are haunted then.

WORD POWER

cleft – split in two

arbour – a sheltered area in a garden, often surrounded by trees

dissected – cut into pieces for examination

ruffled – irritated; agitated

And they are haunted by me. At one in the morning, I am one old man. At two in the morning, I am two. By twelve noon, I am twelve old men, one for every hundred per cent of my financial gain. So my suffering is multiplied by twelve. From that hour until midnight, I wait for the executioner. At midnight, I, in the form of twelve old men, swing invisible outside Lancaster Castle, with my twelve faces to the stone wall!

"This punishment will never cease until I make my story known to two living men together. If two living men could be here, with their eyes open, at one in the morning, they would see me sitting in my chair.

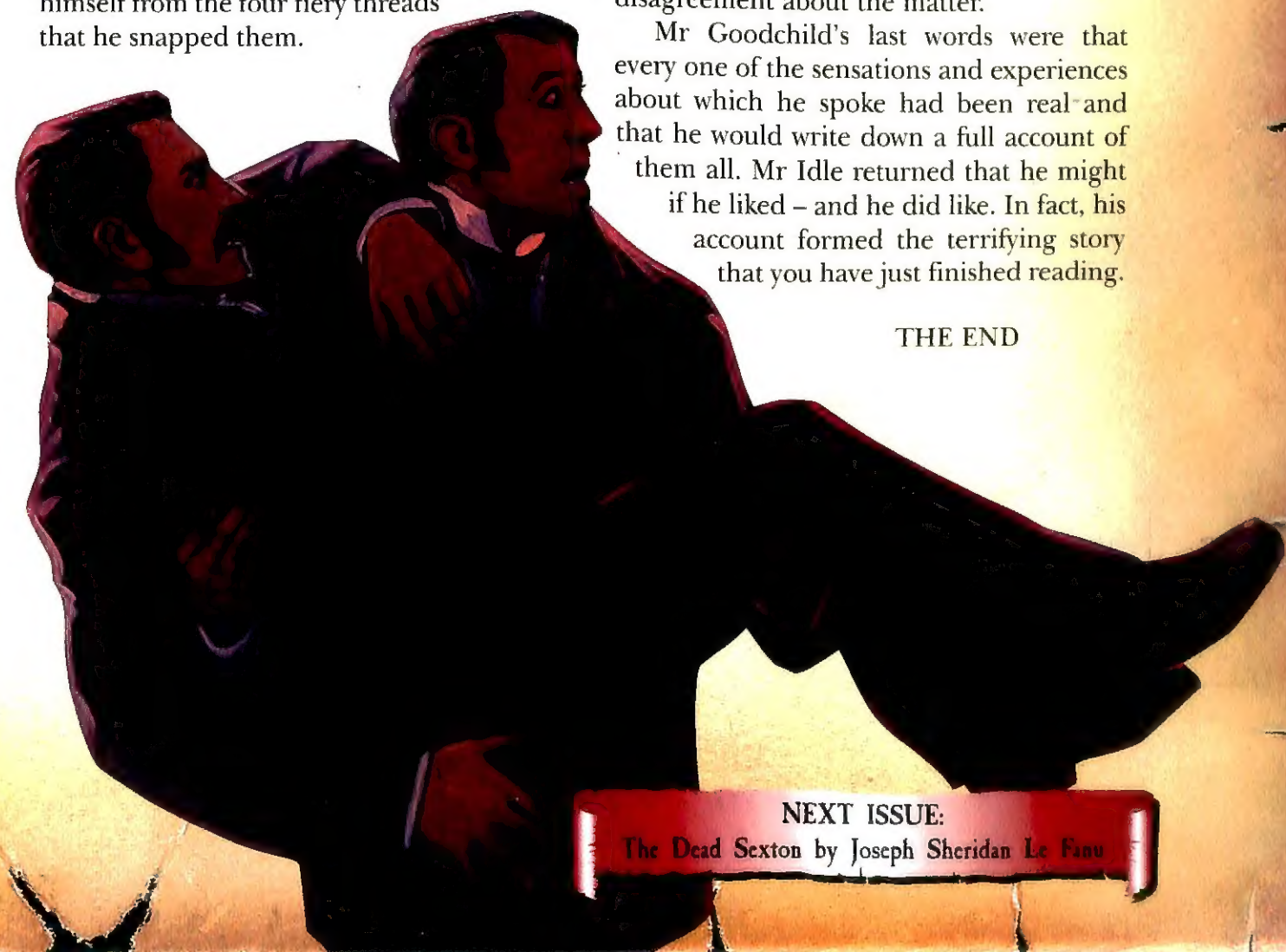
"Rumours that the room was haunted did once bring two men here, to disprove the existence of the ghost. They locked themselves inside the room and had their supper, then sat in front of the fire smoking their pipes. The next few hours passed in idle conversation.

"By a few minutes before one, the younger man, Dick, was dropping off to sleep. His companion tried desperately to keep him awake, but in vain. I suddenly

looked at Dick in horror, for it was almost on the stroke of one, and I felt that he was yielding to me. It was as if a curse was forcing me to send him to sleep, so that I would not be freed from my torment. Then one o'clock sounded, and the older man stood transfixed before me.

"To him alone, I was obliged to tell my story. To him alone, I was an awful phantom making a useless confession. It will ever be thus. The two living men together will never come to release me. When I appear, the senses of one of them will always be locked in sleep and he will neither see nor hear me."

At this, it shot into Mr Goodchild's mind that he was virtually alone with the grim spectre, and that Mr Idle's stillness was explained by his having been charmed asleep at one o'clock. Terrified, Mr Goodchild struggled so hard to release himself from the four fiery threads that he snapped them.



Then he lifted Mr Idle from the sofa and rushed downstairs with him.

"What are you doing, Francis?" demanded Mr Idle. "My bedroom is not down here. I don't want to be carried, anyway. Put me down."

Mr Goodchild put him down in the old hall, and looked about him wildly.

"What are you doing?" asked Mr Idle.

"The one old man," cried the frightened Mr Goodchild, "and the two old men."

"What do you mean?" said Mr Idle.

"Tom, since you fell asleep..." began poor Mr Goodchild.

"Asleep?" said Thomas Idle. "I haven't closed an eye! It's you who has been asleep."

"I? Nonsense," said Mr Goodchild.

Mr Idle completely refused to believe Mr Goodchild's story of the one old man and the two old men. Each accusing the other of having been asleep, the two friends parted company at their separate bedroom doors. Both were a little ruffled by their disagreement about the matter.

Mr Goodchild's last words were that every one of the sensations and experiences about which he spoke had been real and that he would write down a full account of them all. Mr Idle returned that he might if he liked – and he did like. In fact, his account formed the terrifying story that you have just finished reading.

THE END

NEXT ISSUE:

The Dead Sexton by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

GARGOYLES PUZZLES

CARVED UP!

These two beastly carvings are not identical! Can you spot 10 differences?

FREAKY FACTS

In the 15th century, it was common to build churches with gargoyles on them. They acted as drainage spouts, but people also believed that they protected the church against evil.

A RATTLING RIDDLE

Can you pick out just one word from the grid that meets each of the following 4 conditions?

- 1 It is in a down line containing 2 words that can be linked to black.
- 2 It is in an across line containing 2 words that can be linked to water.
- 3 It does not appear in any line containing a word that can be linked to garden.
- 4 The answer is a word not connected with tea.

| | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| FOREST | POT | CHINA | SEAT |
| MARGIN | ADDER | LIST | TIME |
| MILL | PUMP | SET | BIRD |
| PANTRY | PEN | FACE | WHEEL |
| TIN | PIPE | SMITH | PATH |
| | SHED | | |
| | RAIN | | |
| | PARTY | | |
| | FALL | | |
| | THORN | | |

WHAT A PANE!

Each coloured window pane represents a letter of the alphabet. Fit the words into the grid, using the colour chart as a guide.

ANIMALS
ARCH
CARVINGS
CATHEDRAL
CHURCH
DEVIL

FACE
GARGOYLE
GUTTER
MIDDLEAGES
PORCH
RAINWATER

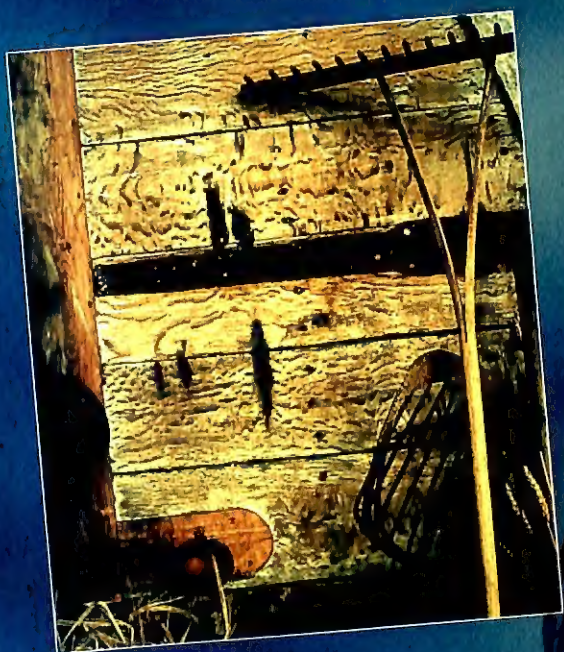
ROOF
ROSEWINDOW
SPIRE
SPOUT
WALL

THE FACE FITS

Which gargoyle face should replace the question mark?

FEARSOME FIEND

An early account of a black dog appearance shows just how deadly they can be. On Sunday 4 August 1577, during a powerful storm, a black dog suddenly appeared in Bungay church in Suffolk. It wrung the necks of two members of the congregation and mysteriously burned another after biting him. Then it suddenly disappeared. On the same day, the dog ran amok in the church of Blythburgh – a neighbouring village. It killed three people and burned another. Burn marks on the church door are preserved to this day as evidence of the fatal visit.



▲ GONE IN A FLASH

Four-hundred-year-old burn marks show the escape route of a killer black dog in Blythburgh.

WHY?

What explanations are there for black dogs? Country folk once referred to them as 'church grims', believing them to be the ghosts of dogs traditionally buried at the north side of new churchyards to guard them from the devil.

It is true that many sightings are around churches or other ancient, sacred monuments. It is also common for black dogs to be seen along a particular stretch of road, appearing or disappearing through a gap in a hedge. There has even been a link made between black dog sightings and ley lines – ancient pathways or energy lines. Churches were often built on the site of standing stones, and hedge gaps often mark ancient pathways. Both of these are

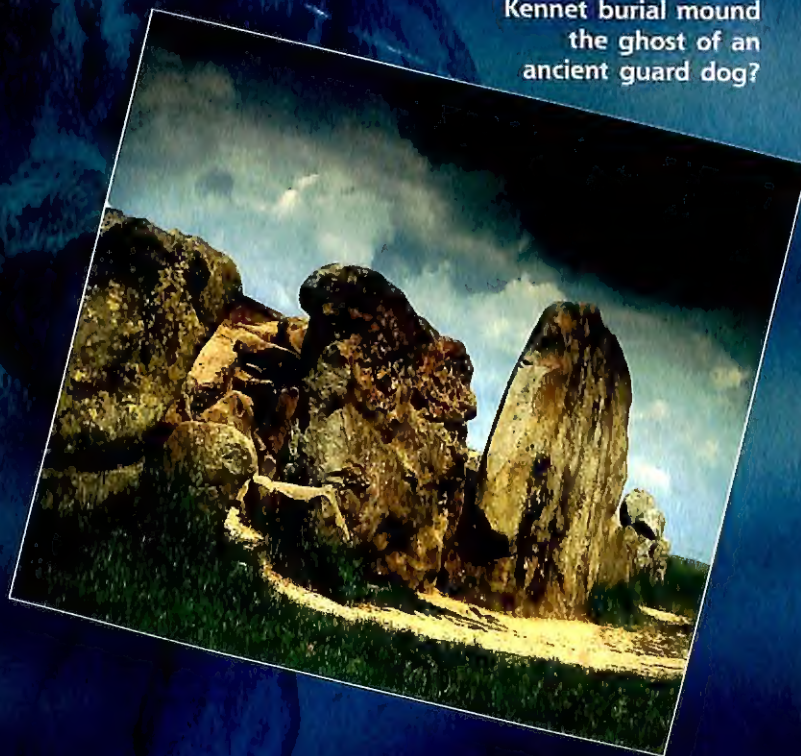
► STORM WARNING

A weather vane in Bungay town centre seems an appropriate memorial to a black dog that appeared during a heavy storm in 1577.



▼ GHOSTLY GUARD DOG

Is the black dog that appears at the West Kennet burial mound the ghost of an ancient guard dog?



markers on ley lines. Another theory is that ghostly dogs are ancient guardians of sacred sites. A phantom dog is said to appear at the West Kennet burial mound in Wiltshire at sunrise on the longest day of the year.

Whatever the answer, should you try to befriend a black dog – and we don't mean the local mutt – be prepared for a spooky experience, as your hand will pass straight through your furry friend!